

Minutes

Asheville City Council - Public Safety Committee March 11, 2008 – 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Fourth Floor Municipal Building Training Room

Present: Council Members: Vice Mayor Jan Davis, Chair; Mayor Terry Bellamy;
Councilwoman Holly Jones
Staff: Jeff Richardson, William Hogan, Greg Grayson, Gary Cornett,
Scott Burnette, Trisha Hardin
Guest: Karen Speed
Audience: Bart Rice, Mike Walker, Kermit Tolley

- **Approval of January and February Minutes**
 - The committee by consensus approved the January and February meeting minutes.
- **Buncombe County Rescue Squad Budget Request**
 - This agenda item was moved from position 5 to position 2 on the agenda.
 - Karen Speed of the Buncombe County Rescue Squad (BCRS) provided a handout detailing their perspective of BCRS's contributions of service to Asheville City Government.
 - BCRS is a non-profit (501c3) agency that provides services currently without funding from Asheville City Government.
 - Their main source of income is fees for service for emergency ambulance transport services.
 - 66% of their services are provided to persons on Medicare, Medicaid, or who are indigent.
 - Their fee recovery is approximately 48%.
 - Ms. Speed introduced Bart Rice, BCRS Chief and Mike Walker, Board Member.
 - BCRS is seeking funding from City Government. They also have a renewable grant from Buncombe County, at \$40,000.00 for FY 07-08.
 - The Committee discussed that this type request usually went through staff to make a report and recommendation. However, that typical process was not followed prior to this committee meeting.
 - Three possibilities were proposed for answering this request: (1) make a recommendation to take the request to Council, (2) have the agency go through the outside agency grant process, (3) ask City staff to review and make recommendations.
 - It was stated that BCRS has already applied for funding through the city's outside agency process.
 - The Committee questioned if BCRS services were not core services of County Government rather than City Government and what actual

contribution BCRS makes towards City Government core public safety services.

- The Committee requested that staff prepare a report and recommendation and send it to the Finance Committee. Kermit Tolley of MEDIC will provide information as well to that Committee.
- A copy of the report and recommendation will be provided to the Public Safety Committee.

- **Gang Activity and Culturally-Supported Misbehavior**

- This item was moved from position 4 to position 3 on the agenda.
- A task force has been created that is working on the following: (1) to educate the community on youth services, (2) to link the website to 211, and (3) to seek employment opportunities.
- A grant has been applied for through the District Attorney's office.
- Reduced prices for bus passes have been proposed.
- Two detectives have been assigned to gang activity in the Police Department and they are doing great work.
- Gang legislation will be lobbied for in May of 2008.
- This item will be taken before City Council.

- **DSU/Patrol/Housing Authority Monthly Report**

- Chief Hogan provided a handout.
- Significant seizures of methamphetamine have been made. Local seizures are down, but seizures of Mexican methamphetamine have increased.
- There have been significant currency seizures.
- Drug interdiction leads to other arrests.
- Drug dealers are being more careful to avoid arrest.
- The crack cocaine arrests are close to the number of arrests for the entire previous year.
- LSD is not the drug of choice in Asheville. Seizures of this drug are usually large due to a few individuals bringing large quantities into the city to sell.
- Another gun buyback program is planned for May of 2008.

- **Ban on Sex Offenders in Parks**

- No further action steps will be taken on this item at this time.

- **Other Business**

- Chief Grayson provided a March training schedule for the Fire and Rescue Department and welcomed the committee as well as Council to attend.

- **Public Comment**

- No public comment.

- **Meeting Adjournment**

- The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

- **Next Meeting**
 - Tuesday, April 8, 2008 – 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm in the Municipal Building 4th floor training room.

- **Tentative Agenda for Tuesday, April 8, 2008**
 - The committee asked that the following items be placed on next month's agenda:
 - Approval of March Committee Minutes
 - DSU/Patrol/Housing Authority Monthly Report (recurring monthly agenda item)
 - Public Comment

- **Future Agenda Items**
 - Adult Bookstores
 - Strategies for Strengthening Relations with Court Systems
 - Update on Pursuit Policy Changes
 - Civil Penalty Options with Prostitution – Council Policy Initiative (June)